

PRESS RELEASE
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WAXMAN RETURNS FROM MIDDLE EAST, AND ATTACKS SAUDI ARABIA
ANTI-JEWISH VISA POLICY

In a sharply worded letter to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger today, Congressman Henry A. Waxman (D-California) has protested Saudi Arabia's visa policies - which prohibit the granting of visas to Jews - and United States acquiescence to these policies.

Mr. Waxman, who is Jewish, was denied a visa by the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Washington because of his religion, when he sought to visit Saudi Arabia as part of a delegation from the House Armed Services Committee to the Middle East.

It was only because of State Department pressure on the Saudi Foreign Ministry that the visa was finally granted after the group had left the United States.

During a meeting with King Faisal in the Royal Palace in Riyadh, Representative Waxman asked the Monarch about his country's policy barring Jews from Saudi Arabia. The King, visibly shaken by the question, responded angrily.

"The Jews have no business in Saudi Arabia. They are our enemies. Jews from America and around the world support Israel. Friends of our enemies are our enemies."

Representative Waxman charged that the U.S. Government, military, and business communities all exclude Jews from Saudi Arabian assignments in a policy of "appeasement of, and complacency with" anti-Jewish discrimination.

Nineteen Congressmen visited Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt from February 7-17. Congressman Waxman was the

only member of the group who had difficulty obtaining a visa from the Saudis. None of the other members on the tour is Jewish.

"I consider it an outrage that a United States Congressman, or any other American citizen, should be denied entrance to a nation with which we have full diplomatic relations because of his religion. It is my unfortunate conclusion that had I not been a Congressman, my request to visit Saudi Arabia would have been denied and that the State Department would not have intervened on my behalf," Mr. Waxman wrote in his letter to Secretary Kissinger.

Congressman Waxman wrote Kissinger, "King Faisal has told us openly and publicly that there is no room for a Jewish homeland in the Middle East and that there is no room for Jews even as visitors in Saudi Arabia. He has made no effort even to obscure his anti-Jewish views, despite an occasional lip service distinction between Jews and Zionists."

"I am informed," Representative Waxman wrote, "that our government, the American military and business communities exclude Jewish personnel from assignments to Saudi Arabia in order not to jeopardize our relationship with that country. I was told our government has chosen not to press the issue."

Mr. Waxman wrote he was "ashamed," as an American citizen, of our government's conduct in this matter. "It is an insult to talk of strengthening and improving our relations with Saudi Arabia by adopting their vicious discriminatory practices against our own citizens."

"If we accept this kind of anti-Jewish discrimination it is a clear sign that we will tolerate an escalated anti-Jewish campaign from the Arab world. Last week, Kuwait was accused of practicing discrimination against certain Jewish

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banks in Western countries. Where will the United States draw the line against its own complicity in bigotry and discrimination?"

Mr. Waxman concluded his letter by asking Secretary Kissinger to personally "review and report on the United States Government position with respect to Saudi Arabian visa policies as they pertain to Jews; the nature and extent of the United States acquiescence and participation in Saudi policies restricting Jews."